

SPACE AND TIME

#14

50¢





Despite the incredible lateness of this issue, I am steadfastly returning to my original submission deadline dates. The deadline for #15 was February 15; the deadline for #16 is May 15. I will be trying to get #15 out next month, in order to get back on schedule, but I want it clear that the only possible person to hold up publication is me, and all lateness is my fault.

Like this time.

For newer readers, perhaps a little background might add your enjoyment of this issue's *horror* story. *Isaac* makes vengeance against *Reifer* for the atrocious murder of his father, *Isaac*, and the death of his friend *Reifer*, whose father tricked *Isaac* into killing. *Isaac* also seeks revenge for a murdered father. The two act in the deserted town of *Tahaden*, whose entire population was enslaved and kept helpless by *Reifer* in his castle, in an attempt to increase his unholy powers. The previous *Isaac* stories have appeared in issues #3, #5, and #7, the whole set of which is available from me for \$1.00. If you're interested

Special note should be given to *Yark Gelotte*, who did a fantastic job of illustrating the story. Applause.

New contributors: *Alan Rosenberg* is a pro artist, whose work you may have seen in a couple of comic books. Unfortunately, I can't think of which ones they are, off-hand. He did this cover for me at the 1971 Conlon here in New York, which is why it looks hurried, but it's still a fine job. *Samuel Kirkland*, who drew most of the *Isaac* for this issue, is also involved in *San Schar's* New *Paranoid* Appropriation Society, a noble effort to see that fantasies get love and control. Her address and Ken's are in the latter column.

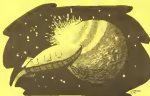
Ed Moore is even too seldom in these pages, but it's always worth waiting for. Ed publishes *Blaze*, and as usual I've lost the details of price, etc., but you can write to Ed at 2000 S. Grant Avenue, Springfield, Mo. 65803. I have a beautiful full page thing of his I'll try to get into next issue.

Also in next issue will be "Delicious Games" by *Daniel Glickerson*, illustrated by *Dave Frollich*, and "Why Not?" by *William McGeeley*, inked by *Alex Sarnick*. Plus a few other surprises, and the usual staff.

Robert Weinberg, noted for his *Herakles* myth adventures, starts his column *Searching for the Fantastic* in this issue, and I think you'll agree it's a fine addition to our regular features.

As I mentioned before, I hope to have #15 out before the *Lunarcon*; but, in the likely event that I don't, I hope to see you all there.

John Sargent



SPACE & TIME #16

CONTRIBUTORS

Sheryl Linkhead
Dore Frollich
Mark Gelotte
Dan Osterman
Ted Pauls
Ed Romero
Kenneth Seeger
Dorell Schweitzer
Leon Taylor
Robert Weinberg



EDITOR

D-BONE OF THE DWARF KING.....Jordan Linner
#1-A BRIDE OF THE DARKNESSMark Gelotte

FEATURES

#POOPY.....editorial
#3-104 POINT 2.....Dorell Schweitzer
#6-SWARMING FOR THE FANTASTIC
.....Robert Weinberg
#7-4NITE ONE.....Book Review section
#9-MORE TO DEAL WITH YOU.....Research Bureau
#1-OPEN CASE.....letter column

Entire contents copyright 1972 by Jordan Linner

SPACE & TIME #16, February, 1972. Published quarterly by Jordan and Patricia Linner, 204 E-7, #1010 15th Street, New Jersey, N.Y. 07102, an a non-profit amateur fiction magazine. Single issue \$1. Subscriptions \$3.00. All correspondence and contributions encouraged and acknowledged. All rates on arrangement. All rights to material contained herein revert to author or authors involved.

The Rune of the Dwarf-King

by Gordon Lynner

Burgandy held the dark-stained goblet to his lips and sipped its red wine contents into his mouth. By the light of the circle candle, Carlyn and Arachne tallied up the night's profits. There were several separate piles on the bare wooden table—one for silver, one for semi-precious jewels, yet another for precious stones, and so on. The flickering flame played across the smooth faces of the youths, mysteriously aging and rejuvenating them. Burgandy sat in the corner, away from the candle's briske, his scarred and worn visage betraying more age than he cared to admit.

At last both lads finished their work, and Carlyn held the list out for the master's inspection. Burgandy took it, placing the goblet on the floor beside his chair. Squinting in the dim light, he ran his finger along the sums of paper, stopping briefly at each line, but remaining silent until he reached the end.

"Not bad," he judged at last. "Not bad for amateurs."

"Not bad?" protested Arachne. "I nearly got my throat slit for the Vice-Corporal's lady's rubies!"

"Exactly why you are still an amateur," replied Burgandy. "Such clumsiness is inexcusable, even in beginners. It's all very well to be dreaming, snatching fine goods from the very racks of Kallmar's wares, but it's hardly practical. Especially the wares of high officials, who tend both to swarthy faces and bear grudges for an inhumanly long season of time. A fine lot of good your dreams will do you in Kallmar's gallery."

"I thought to impress you," pouted Arachne.

"I'm impressed, all right, that you managed to escape with a whole skin. As it is, you won't be able to show your face in the streets of Kallmar for at least . . ."

Burgandy was cut off by the pale light suddenly cast on his reclining form from the open doorway. Two hooded figures stood silhouetted there.

"The Kallmar guard!" exclaimed Carlyn, drawing his sword. "They must have followed Arachne here!"

One of the hooded figures spoke: "I see you have two new apprentices, Burgandy. Are they making the same mistakes I did?"

An owl, the two apprentices turned at Burgandy's loud guffawing. "Put away your wares, lads," the master ordered. "This is no marketplace, but my star pupil. I'd recognize your voices anywhere, Karal!"

Herein Carlyn ceased to see at the man, who just a few years ago, had stolen the fabled star jewels of Kallmar from their reportedly theft-proof chamber in the heart of the palace itself. Even the master thief, Burgandy, would have hesitated to meet such a feat. Arachne, too, felt admiration



Two hooded figures stood silhouetted there.

well up within him, hand in hand with jealous envy. He kept it hidden beneath a sullen scowl. He need for him to feed this outlaw's ego!

But Moran was not seeking accolades. He strided silently into the small room, removing his hood to expose his drawn features. His blank expression became almost sinister in the unflickering candlelight. Behind him, a slimmer hand revealed her two fine, delicate features, hardly done justice in the disguise. The long black hair, tightly bunched under the garment, flowed exquisitely down her back. She might have been more beautiful had she smiled, but she was as expressionless as Moran.

"I see you still open locked doors as silently as ever," smiled Burgundy, offering his goblet. Moran declined with a slight movement of his head, while the girl, Shalima, remained impassive. She did not seem to notice the master thief's gesture. The gobletkin returned to the floor, uncast.

"Name. How's your father, Moran?"

"Dead," came the reply, said and hard. "Killed by his blood-enemy, the foul wizard Melifar!"

"Oh," Burgundy averted his eyes. "I'm sorry to hear that. Leabach was a great friend of mine. Many's the time I'd have been captured and tortured by Kalimar's guard, if not for his magical aid. Even when you, his only son, turned to me to learn the art of stealing. Instead of becoming the student of sorcery he'd always wanted you..."

"Will you help me avenge his death?"

The room was silent in the flickering candlelight. Carlyn stood at the door, almost forgetting to look it in the presence of Burgundy's favorite apprentice. The master thief took a long deep look into Moran's eyes, and his experience read the turmoil and hatred that burned behind them.

"You've said, Moran, since I last saw you. Of course, I'll help. Now?"

Moran pulled up the chair vacated by Carlyn. Shalima looked about the room until arcane, realising what she sought, offered him chair. She accepted, and Morach her expression remained fixed, her eyes swelled briefly. As both apprentices sat themselves on cushions on the floor, near the master thief, Moran spoke.

"Shalima and I were returning to Kalimar--or rather, to my father's hidden cave outside Kalimar--hoping nobody had uncovered it since my absence. Melifar had eluded us, and I'd hoped I could find some clue to his new location in my father's notes. It seemed like our only chance.

"The day was hot and dusty, so both we and our horses were quite dry. As we entered a heavily wooded area of the road, I chanced to see a small cottage I had to pass through narrow gaps between the trees, and then it was only through luck or accident that I spotted it at all. Shalima and I waved our mounts up a winding, almost invisible streambed, which I somehow knew led to the cottage.

"It stood in the middle of a small clearing; I suspect, had it not been for the cottage, there probably would not have been a clearing. A figure appeared in the doorway, a man dressed in a flowing robe. Long light brown hair almost touched his shoulders, and a dark red beard protruded from his chin. He appeared to be expecting us, and under his right arm he held a water-skin. Without a word, he offered it to Shalima. She drank eagerly. I followed her example, then returned the skin to her best. Still silent, he indicated tracks along the side of the cottage where we could water our horses.

"Now, Moran," our benefactor said, while our animals drank, "I believe we should talk."

"I admit I was startled that he knew my name, and my response was less than effusive. 'And who are you that we should talk?'"

"I am Nodrog."



Nodrog the necromancer!
the final authority

"Nedroq, the necromancer? I had seen his name often in my father's books. Indeed, he wrote several of them! And from my father's notes I gathered he was the final authority on necromantic matters. If anyone could aid my battle with Nelfer, it was him.

"He seemed to sense my thoughts. 'Only indirectly am I interested in your mission,' he said. 'I have enough to do without being bothered by men's petty ambitions and selfish actions. But I do have a use for your craving for vengeance.

"Nelfer's enslavement of an entire town is abominable, a violation of the responsibilities of sorcery. He is overreaching his boundaries, to the point where I will have to fight him to protect myself. I would rather not be bothered with unnecessary battles, and as long as you're so hesitant on destroying him, I may as well let you take care of it for us.

"But you'll never do it if you keep going at it the way you are!"

"Nedroq struck his beard as he passed. His magnanimity is incredible. I was intensely aware of every word he said, and although the words often stung, never since did I ever think about denying what he said. I was headstrong; he told me, selfish, stubborn, impulsive, and I had to agree he was correct.

"But although he looked with scorn on those attributes of mine, he readily admitted that it was because of them I would eventually destroy the wizard Nelfer."

Horan swallowed and ran his tongue along his lips. "I'll have that wine now," he said, and took the goblet from Burgandy's outstretched hand. When he had quenched his thirst, he continued,

"Nedroq told me of runes--the most powerful form of magic, because it is the only perfect form of magic. Runes can be used in any manner that can be conceived of by man or wizard, and Nedroq insisted my only chance of defeating Nelfer was to cancel his magic with a rune. He gave me a list of the signs or so runes he knew to still be in existence. Most of them are in irrefragable armor--mountain peaks, ocean bottoms, and so forth. But there is one not half a day's journey from Kallmar.

"It is the dwarf king's most jealously guarded possession."

"And you would like me to help you steal it, ah, Nelfer?" asked Burgandy.

"I need you to steal it for me," Horan replied.

Arachne made a disgusted sound. "If you're such a great thief, why can't you steal the damned thing yourself?"

Horan ignored the sarcasm, because he was uninterested in the apprentice. He directed his answer, instead, to Burgandy. "I have tried, but I cannot even enter the dwarf king's kingdom, let alone the palace containing the rune. The king originally came into possession of two runes, with the first, he established his kingdom, protected it during the years after the fall of the Old Gods, and created a barrier designed to keep anything remotely magical out, except by the king's permission. It was the only way he could protect the second rune from the wizards and sorcerers who would destroy his entire kingdom to obtain it. Although few of them even recall such things as runes, much less who has them."

Burgandy took a deep breath. "Now that is what I call a powerful piece of magic," he said.

"As the son of a wizard, I obviously have an excellent potential for wizardry, whereas you, Burgandy, have only the average man, and may enter the dwarf king's kingdom easily."

"Horan," the master thief said, "you will have your rune before another day passes."

"Burgandy," Horan said as he stood up to shake the master thief's hand, "I can't express my gratitude. I dare not enter Kallmar again."

"I understand. I shall bring the rune to Leebol's coven. It is still intact?"

"It is."

Silently, the bargain sealed, Horan and Shaliss pulled their hoods up over their heads and strode out of the room.

"A man would sell his soul for a kind look from such a beauty," whispered Carpio.

"She's worth a man's soul, all right, but it would take more than a kind look to satisfy me." Arachne rolled his eyes lazily.

"Both of you, to sleep," Burgandy commanded sternly. "Tonight, Arachne, I'll show you what it means to be a real thief."

"Like Horan?" muttered Arachne. "He ain't no such."

It was mid-morning by the time Horan and Shaliss reached the marketplace, just before the city gates. In broad daylight, they could not scale the city walls as they had done the night before. In any case, no one would question their leaving the city.

It was the current fashion in Kallmar for the nobles to wear hooded garments when walking among the common people, so Horan and Shaliss attracted little attention. Indeed, just the opposite, for the commoners tended to shy away from the nobles and go about their own business, unless directly spoken to. At least, the less foolhardy of them did.

"Silk," cried a man's voice, and a rough hand snatched Shaliss's hood from her head. "See you so far last night...."

"Take your filthy hands off her, lest you lose them," rasped Horan, fumbling the hilt of his sword beneath his cloak.

Flustered, the would-be settler of debts saw Shaliss's face clearly for the first time and realized he'd made an error. A fatal error. "My most humble apologies, sir. My lady, I thought you were someone I knew... but I should have realized that you wouldn't... I mean... you are not the woman I met last night."

Nervously, he peered into the darkness of Horan's hood, to see how, if at all, his apology had been accepted. Then, suddenly, he reacted for his sword and pulled the hood off.

"The thief! The thief of our star jewel! Guard! Guard! Guard!"

Horan strangled the man's screams with a thrust of his blade, which he had drawn beneath his cloak, but it was too late. Already, others who recognized him were closing in, and voices filled the air to swell their ranks. At the end of the marketplace were the city gates, and beyond their horns and snarls. Horan grasped Shaliss by the arm and ran for them. The girl hesitated, briefly roused by the softness of events around her, the bleeding corpse at her feet. The angry voices--and in that moment their voices of escape were cut off by the approach of the fellow guard. They were forced back against the outer wall. Horan still tightly gripped the hilt of his drawn but unsheathed blade, while his mind raced desperately, trying to think of a way out.

Panic and faster-than-thought thoughts flew. Irrelevant thoughts, half-remembered, heavily-accented spells and incantations from his father's books. His lips moved silently, forming strange and childish words. The crowd faded from him as his mind encompassed his entire body. And Shaliss's, too. They saw gray and white swirls....

And they stood outside the walls of Kallmar.

Generally, the angry crowd agreed that Horan had probably used a cloak of invisibility to escape their vengeance. A few of the more inquisitive claimed they had been fooled by something the eyes could not see. At least three old wags claimed they had been fooled most horribly by unseen hands and things. But those idle onlookers, those few who from an adequate vantage point could see, unprejudiced, what had really occurred,

felt the wall for hidden panels and openings. They found none. The fugitives had passed through the feet of solid masonry.

Settling, Moran stood almost shaking in the excitement of what they had done. "That wasn't you, was it?" he asked Shalima. But he already knew it wasn't.

The girl shook her head. "All I ever learned was a few simple illusions. Nothing like this! Why haven't you tried your powers against Nulfor?"

"I don't know. I didn't know I could. In blind panic, I somehow summoned the will to back the spells I've learned. I was grief-stricken, angered, discouraged in my encounters with Nulfor. I never had to use sorcery. It never felt right."

"Of course," replied Shalima. "Shove everything else, you need the confidence to perform sorcery!" As they spoke, they untied their horses.

"By the seven kingdoms!" exclaimed Moran. "It took self-preservation to bring out my power, but now I can master it. In time. If only my father could see us."

At the thought of his father, Moran's vision darkened. Then, laughing, he climbed onto Nulfor's back. "Now I've gotten that ruse, Nulfor hasn't a chance. I must admit, I had little faith in my ability to apply the ruse, but now.... I haven't felt this good in years."

Shalima smiled, sharing Moran's triumph. Together, headstrong with success, they rode to Lancel's new.

"Open up in there, damn you!" The solitary figure pounded on the heavy oak door of the palace. Suddenly it opened, and before him stood a bearded dwarf in guardman's uniform.

"What is it?" spat the dwarf through a gap in his teeth. "And it had better be important, or by the seven kingdoms I'll...."

"I bring gifts for your king, from my master Moran, who seeks his aid in avenging the atrocious murder of his father."

"No done, done he?" The guard scratched his chin and belly at the same time, and drawing himself up to his full four feet of height, asked, "What kind of gifts?"

"Two chests of treasure. See for yourself." Carolyn unwrapped the lock on one of the chests, revealing a fortune in diamonds, rubies, and emeralds in the pale light of a waning moon.

"Well, I'll let you in on a little secret," the guard said, with a greedy glint in his eyes. "The king is very talented, attempting a jewelry. However...we will accept your gift." A silent signal, and several more dwarves, in slightly less ornate versions of the first guard's uniform, rushed out and lifted the heavy chests.

Carolyn protested, but the dwarves ignored him. Out of frustration, he clasped one by the shoulder. The dwarf turned angrily and, with a strength belied by his size, pushed Carolyn to the ground. Muttering quietly, the last dwarfed forth with both hands and grabbed two of the guards by their thick coats. Simultaneously, he received two slightly knitted fists in the pit of his stomach and fell to the ground, bent double in pain. Laughing, the dwarves carried the chests into the palace and slammed shut the heavy door. "Be grateful we didn't toss you into the dungeons for attempted bribery," sneered the captain of the guard.

Defeated, Carolyn ignobly crawled back from the palace to the dark street where his horse waited. Slowly, painfully, he rode off, leaving behind two other horses and the stolen cart he had used to transport the chests. Despite the pain, a slow grin spread across his face.

"All right, back to your past," shouted the captain of the guard, after the chests had been placed near the locked entrance to the dwarf king's treasure room. One by one, the other dwarves slipped away, dragging,



They saw grey and white swirle.

"I'm sure our king will be generous with us for our actions tonight."

As the footfalls of the last guardswoman echoed faintly to vanishing, the captain turned to the captured treasures. He walked around each chest several times, studying the corners, admiring the workmanship, and itching to get into them.

After all, the king could hardly know how many jewels they contained. He wouldn't miss, say, two or three. Or four. Besides, as captain of his majesty's guard, he deserved some kind of immediate reward for his brilliant coup tonight. He unlatched the first chest and peered down at the sparkling beauty.

From beneath the jewels a swordpoint forced its way through glass diamonds, imitation rubies, bits of emerald wine flasks, and the heart of a dwarf of somewhat limited intelligence. The illustrious captain of the dwarf king's guard gave one brief, choking gasp, and slumped over the jewels riches, spilling many to the floor.

"Dared" came a voice from beneath the jewels. "I wish they wouldn't fall on top of me!" Strong arms dug their way out, pushing the dwarf's corpse to the side until it fell to the floor. Using the edges of the chest for leverage, Burgundy drew his whole body out of the chest, spilling glass jewels along the stone floor in all directions. The master thief stretched to relieve his contracted muscles, then opened the second chest.

"Let's go, Arachne. We've work to do." No answer. Had he misjudged the amount of air his apprentice would need? It seemed impossible, but... Frantically, he dug into the jewels.

"Arachne!"

"I'm here," came the apprentice's voice, slightly wavering, as Burgundy uncovered his head.

"Didn't you hear me call you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, why in the name of the seven kingdoms didn't you get up?"

Arachne smiled weakly, almost sheepishly, and pointed to his bent legs. "Cramps."

After a few minutes of kneading muscles, Arachne was almost able to walk normally. He hobbled after Burgundy as the master thief started down the long hallway leading from the treasure room.

"Now, stay with me and pay close attention to my words," Burgundy warned his apprentice. "This time from scavengers is particularly dangerous. Nothing must be taken for granted. Every slab of stone in the floor could be a disguised pit of stakes--every column a fanged demon, lying in wait. Our dwarf king would be a pathetic leader indeed if he seriously depended on these safe he calls a palace guard for his defenses."

"Who is it?" came a dwarfish voice from around the corner of the darkened corridor.

"On your knees," whispered Burgundy, "but stay in the middle of the corridor." The master thief pressed his body tightly against a wall, as the dwarf turned the corner. He held only a candle for light, and squinted into the darkness. He could barely make out the silhouette of Arachne's shadowed form.

"Is that you, Mike?" the guard asked, frowning slower. "I was afraid you might not come back to finish our case. That's three weeks pay you owe me, now. Say, you're not Mike. You're not even a dwarf."

Burgundy's blade pierced the guard's heart from the back. He wiped the blood on the dead dwarf's uniform with a look of distaste. "This is the worst part of slavery. I prefer to run my sword through a man while he's facing me, at least. I suppose I'm just an invincible romantic."

Suddenly, remembering he was still on his knees, Arachne stood upright, studying the half-and expression on Burgundy's face.



Burgundy drew himself
out of the chest.

"Oh, well," sighed the master thief, "he was only a dwarf, anyway."

Through more darkened corridors they threaded their way, but the only other guard they encountered lay fast asleep in a doorway, feet asleep, with a bottle of his majesty's beer obtained from an easily bribed member of the kitchen staff. Arachne snorted.

"Don't get too confident," cautioned Burgundy. "The less effective the obvious defense measures are, the more devious the dwarf king's wily defenses are bound to be."

The pair soon found themselves before the door of the king's chambers, and Arachne received a little more practice in the art of unlocking locked doors.

The king's private chambers were immense, as one might expect, dominated by a large canopied bed, large enough to sleep two (three, if they were dwarves) and so on. The silken covers trailed to the floor all about it. The rest of the chamber was lined with low furniture, cluttered with gaudy statuettes, cheap paintings, and larid books. The dwarf king obviously had a collecting instinct. He also had terrible taste. The entrance to the secret chamber in which the Pave was carefully hidden, according to Moran, was most certainly in here. Burgundy began feeling along the wall in one direction, his apprentice in the other.

After a good hour and a half, the two sat on the king's bed, rubbing their knees, which were sore from leaping into furniture which really should have been up & hanging, where it is hanging. Burgundy fingered a ghastly purple and green plaster head until he couldn't stand to look at it any longer.

"Arachne, my boy," he said, "there are secret rooms and there are secret rooms, but I hope to be hung for my trade if you can get to one from here. Let's try one of the other chambers--old Morog may have been mistaken."

Contentedly, they slipped into the hallway. The dwarf king's chamber was the last in the hall. To the right of the door hung a heavy tapestry, and beyond that, the door to another chamber. Footsteps echoed in the distance, but they had already carefully unlocked the king's chamber. Both took refuge behind the heavy tapestry. There they stood, hugging the walls, their hands as close to their sword hilts as they dared move them. Nervously, Arachne's other hand played over the rough stone wall at their backs, while the two dwarf guards approached.

"It will go ill with us if the king returns to find his dead, and his murderer escaped," said one in a low voice.

"Where is the captain at a time like this?" replied his companion. "That's what I'd like to know!"

The brick Arachne had been fingering suddenly gave way. He waited an instantaneous gasp. The guardsman turned at the sound. Silently, they strode to the tapestry. While one stood poised with his sword before it, the other quickly pulled back the decoration, to reveal....

Nothing.

Burgundy and Arachne were in the secret room. Adjoining the king's chamber, Morog had said. There had been no mention of an entrance from the king's chamber. That was mere conjecture. "See?" explained Burgundy. "Just as I told you. Never take anything for granted."

There was a short, winding staircase leading upward to the main floor of the hidden chamber. In the center of the room, which was bare of all other furniture, stood a glass case. Through the glass, the two thieves saw a scroll-like piece of paper. "By the abuse, at least, that that is the paper!"

"I think we can, with relative safety," replied Burgundy. "Now, walk carefully behind.... The master thief grasped Arachne's jerkin in time to keep himself from plunging through the floor. Fortunately, the apprentice was able to keep his balance.

"No think we've found our magical defenses!"



Through more darkened corridors, they threaded their way.

The floor, though it looked complete, was not. The illusion of a solid floor hid a pit with saw-like ledges on which one could walk to the glass case—if one knew how to follow, or even where they were. Burgandy and Arachne had wasted the much time as it was; they did not know how long the dwarf king's revelry would last, but it certainly wouldn't linger past dawn, and it was after midnight now. Burgandy looked around the chamber, realizing for the first time how incredibly high the ceiling was. A tall window looked about twenty-five feet up, and stretched for another fifteen. A long round slat, like a tall tree with the bark peeled off, was suspended across the chamber, at a height of thirty feet.

"Haven't the slightest idea what that's for," he remarked to his apprentice, "but I know what I'm going to do with it. Slip outside and get us that long cord that was hanging from the tapestry. It should do."

When Arachne returned, Burgandy tied a knot on each end of the cord and rolled it up, carefully measuring its length with an expert eye. He then handed one end to his apprentice. "A good 75 feet, which should just about make it. Now, whatever you do, don't let go of this rope. The knot's to help your grasp."

Burgandy flung the other end through the air, unwinding the cord. It fell short and he cried again. On the third try he leaped it over the slot, and the weight of the other end brought more cord with it, until it went taut in Arachne's hand. Unhooking his sword, he leaped off the dangling knot, grasping it tightly as he swung back and forth, shifting his weight so as to come closer to the glass case.

Arachne's leg muscles ached from the effort to stand still, and his arms were beginning to stiffen. Burgandy suddenly shifted his weight hard, almost wrenching his assistant free of his precarious position, and crashed his foot through the glass case. On the next swing he smashed up the rope and stuffed it into his belt. He felt a shudder, as if a shadow had passed over him, but he shrugged it off and swung back over the pit to Arachne's side. Then he felt it again. His thieving instincts told him something was wrong. His manner became grimmer than it had ever been, as far as his assistant could remember.

"Get out of here. Fast."

The fastest way out was alone the outside of the castle, so they went through the king's chambers again. Out the windows they climbed, and raced along the palace ramparts, breathing heavily. Both caught their breath at a strange creaking noise, and they stood still on the crenells, peering into the darkness. The moon was waning and low in the sky. The crenels echoed, hideously hollow.

"By all that's holy, what was that sound?" asked Arachne.

"Another protection, I'm afraid. Get down in the shadows and don't move a muscle." The two thieves huddled in darkness while, overhead, a great winged thing hurried. Its speed was incredible, a streak of black momentarily blurring out the stars, then disappearing. With each sweep it came nearer the two. Beant headed as hands clutched sword hilts. But, although the creature seemed to come closer, it made no attempt to grab them. It had not seen them where they crouched, and was trying to frighten them out into the open.

Arachne wiped his mouth. "I don't think I can take any more of this."

"Don't let your nerves betray you," warned the senior thief.

Another swoop, the creature's claws almost raking the stone behind which they cowered.

"I can't stand this any longer," repeated Arachne.

"Quiet. Be still. It doesn't see us."

A few yards away from the shadow in which they crouched lay another, the shadow of a rampart from which they could safely leap to the ground and escape. A few yards! A few yards! Of escape so near buried itself deep in Arachne's mind, sailing away at his frayed nerves, until he finally screamed, "I can't stand it!"



He smashed his foot through the glass case.

He dashed out of the shadow to escape.

A flash of black against the sky, the death-cry of a fear-struck man, and both creature and apprentice were gone. Suddenly, Burgundy ran to the rampart and leaped, before the creature could return. Cautionally, he made his way to the battlements, his eyes scanning the skies frantically. Nothing followed him.

Leading Arachna's horse, he rode toward Kalimar and Moran's meeting place. As fast as he urged the two beasts, it was not fast enough to satisfy him.

The early rays of dawn were just touching the highest points of the dwarf king's palace when his royal majesty returned from his revelry. His cry, "Moran was!" was loud in preparation at the festivities, dissipated in seconds as he stood over the corpse of the captain of his guard, his life's blood drying on the useless baubles surrounding his still form. Without a word, he pushed to his room-pace, the room his own guards had not suspected to exist, and confirmed his greatest fears--the case was shattered!

A dull thud in the corner of the room attracted his attention. The winged demon, sitting on its perch, greedily chomping on Arachna's bones, had dropped another one onto the small pile fering in the corner. After, of course, denuding it of all meat.

"Where is my rune, you useless spawn of Hell?" cried the dwarf king angrily. Startled by his tone, the demon dropped what was left of the apprentice's carcass.

"Are you so interested in your stomach you cannot protect my possessions? Go forage in the filthy streets of neighboring Kalimar, then! I banish you from my shadow! NOW!" With a blinding flash, the demon vanished. The dwarf king looked at the mutilated body.

"So find a aliny cave to pick your bones in, you miserable creature," he muttered bitterly. There had obviously been two thieves in his palace this night, or the demon would have replaced the rune before leaving this wretched trail to shreds.

"Still I must be avenged on the one who stole my last and most valuable rune. Cursed he shall be, with my most horrible of curses--one so terrible I shudder to think of it, myself." Grudgingly, he pushed his way out of the chamber, past startled guards who moved quickly out of his path or never moved again, who stood staring and trembling at their master's rage.

Into his warily library the dwarf king went, directly to an ancient volume of evil lore. As morning sunlight began pouring through the window, he began his monotonous intoning.

"Arachna is dead."

Carlyn's jaw dropped, unbelieving. "Now...?"

"Blame by what manner of creature I pray I never find out--one of the dwarf king's pets."

Moran practically resisted disappointment. "Then, you failed..."

"No, Moran. Burgundy never fails. Here is your cursed rune. Use it well when you desire help, for he has yet another death to atone for." Burgundy held out the rune, but just as the sorcerer's son grasped the paper, the master thief shrieked in inhuman agony. Horrified, all three watched as Burgundy's skin began liberally to turn itself inside out.

The dwarf king smiled in his palace as he finished his incantation. If he had lost the use of his rune, at least one clever thief would never use it, either. Exhausted by the effort, the king slumped in his chair and fell asleep. For him, the incident was over.

But for Burgundy...



Burgundy ran to the rampart and leaped.

Sensitive internal organs, exposed to raw air and dust for the first time, responded with pain. Pain! Burgundy's skull was aflame with unbridled agonies. He shrieked idiotically, his mind blasted by the impact of pain shooting through his warped frame.

"Horen," cried Shalies, unable to watch any longer, "do something." Her face was pale and drawn, and she moved outside the cave to be alone.

"This...this is magic more powerful than I could dream of," spluttered Horen. "I can only do this one mercy." Horen twisted his sword from its scabbard and thrust its tip through Burgundy's exposed, heaving, bleeding heart. Blood spouted wildly, and Horen thrust again and again, trying to kill his former teacher quickly, but Burgundy fell slowly, painfully, all the while, as if some malignant force were trying to keep him alive, to live in horror and pain, to suffer in sadness.

Eventually, Burgundy lay dead.

Carlyn spoke softly. "You might have used the rune to save him."

Horen shook his head. "It doesn't matter. He would have been insane, anyway."

"But if the rune is as powerful as you say it is. It could've done anything."

Horen wiped the blood from his blade. "I didn't think of it. Besides, the rune must be used to destroy Molfur, and that is worth any man's life."

Shalies had reentered the cave, weakly, sitting down at the entrance.

"Even Burgundy's?" Even the man who taught you all you know?"

"It couldn't be helped, damn you!" Horen tossed a jade paperweight at Carlyn, but missed.

Shalies looked up. "I heard you outside," she said. "Is it true. Horen? Could you have saved Burgundy?"

"Oh, shut up! I don't need your blatherings. Both of you, get up! I must study my father's books, and cannot be disturbed. Somewhere there must be a clue to Molfur's whereabouts. Hadron said I would kill him, and I will! I must!"

Shalies stared at Horen in disbelief horror. There was something frightening in the faraway tone his voice had that she did not recognize as belatedly to the man who wept at his friend's death, so long ago in childhood. This was not the man she had ridden with, slept with, made love to in the months since that tragedy. This was some unknown, inhuman monster.

Horen ran his finger along the shelves in his wizard-father's library. "I must summon Hadron," he said to no one in particular. "He'll know where Molfur is hiding."

Selecting a volume, Horen turned to the great reading table and reached Shalies and Carlyn staring after him, numbed by his unexpected outburst. "Will Horen?" Shalies's voice cried, "that said! And take this bloody axe with you," he concluded, peering at the hideous corpse of the master thief.

They buried Burgundy. It took all day, because they had no shovels and Carlyn had to die with his sword, but eventually they were able to roll the master thief's mutilated corpse into the shallow grave and cover it with a mound of squelchiness. Burgundy's sword had fallen loose when the transformation started, and Carlyn used it to mark the grave. They stayed there for a long time, hardly resting the overbearing night until the half-protruding sword reflected moonlight.

They returned to the cave. Within a single candle sent the image of a man bent over a huge beam, fervently turning page after page, searching. Although a slight breeze filled the night air, the candle did not flicker at all. Carlyn and Shalies decided it would be best to stay outside. The night was warm.



The master thief shrieked in inhuman agony.

"Where will you go from here, Carlyn?" asked Shalies as the faint light from the sawe played across her delicate features.

"Where can I go?" Both my parents were dead of the plague when I was born. I was a remarkable man, that master thief. A remarkable man." Carlyn's voice trailed off into the night. Then, as if to his reverie, "Where will you go?"

"With him, I suppose," Shalies said sadly, pointing toward the sawe. "I also have a father's death to avenge, so we still share a common goal. But, somehow, now, vengeance doesn't seem all that important. I don't know."

There was a silence broken only by frogs and insects, and the slight rustling of leaves in the last warm days of summer. Then...

"Carlyn?"

"Yes?"

"He frightens me. What he's become, it frightens me. I remember grief when he first tricked him into slaying his best friend, and yet, today...you saw his reaction to Burgandy's death. Like it was nothing."

"A thief expects to die someday. I suppose Horan realized that."

"No, Carlyn. You don't know him as I do. He told me so much of your mother, he revered him as a second father. He would not so easily accept his mentor's passing."

"He's changing, Carlyn. Every day he's changing, becoming less and less human with every step he takes toward his goal."

"Carlyn," Shalies half-whispered, placing her hand on the apprentice's arm, "please come with us. He frightens me so terribly, yet I must travel with him to see my father avenged."

Carlyn wrapped his arm protectively around the girl, as she sobbed silently against his shoulder. Tears stained the apprentice's tunic, and soaked through the thin material, but he made no effort to save her. "I'll stay with you," he said, when her crying had stopped. "I promise you that much. Until Horan destroys this wizard, and the demoniac leaves him, I'll stay with you. After that, I guess you'll want to..."

Immediately, Shalies kissed him full on the lips, delicately at first, then passionately. Together they fell back on the ground, and Carlyn, fueled with Shalies's fiery passions, the girl arched her back and stirred position to make his task easier. Together they rolled in the soft, sweet grass at the mouth of the cave, finding each other again and again.

And all through that were late summer evenings Horan studied his father's books, oblivious to the sounds of lovemaking in the darkness beyond.

Obscure or indifferent,



Horan studied his father's books.

Low point X

A Bride of the Darkness

by Mark Gelotte

Adeline awoke with a lurch from her makeshift bed. Her eyes swelled with water as she let out a desperate scream, breaking the dead silence of the old hunting cabin. It was another nightmare that had gripped her during sleep. Another nightmare that fell into the same pattern as all the others before it.

Slowly she crawled from the bed, still shaking both from cold and the nightmare. Carefully she placed a log on the low fire in the fireplace and sat down on the floor in front of it.

Outside the night air was growing windy and cloudy. Adeline felt like the character in a tale of mystery; the old house, stormy night, and dark woods made the perfect setting.

Her eyes shifted to the window and the pine trees silhouetted in the midnight sky. The trees slowly changed before her drifting gaze. Their vague forms shifted into what she feared most. She saw her mother and father again grotesquely sprawled upon the floor and their livid features asced by the thin red streams of liquid spreading from their punctured necks... --

Adeline jerked back into consciousness as she realized what she was doing. She had come to the cabin to forget what had happened. Whatever "thing" that had been terrorizing her town and had killed her parents would surely have been captured and destroyed by the time she felt she should return. She reflected her own once-close touch with death. Only scars were left now, which her hand unworingly caressed. She remembered as her fingers pulled away from the healed neck. Now she wished her parents could have lived in the same way she had.

The room filled with a soft light. Adeline picked herself up and went to the window. She saw the black forest before her, a forest which filled her body with an uneasiness; undesirable yet present. It sent a shiver racing up her spine. She looked up at the illumination filtering down through the wandering stars above. It came from the silver line of the full moon.

Only when she turned back to the fire did she feel the aching tiredness in her body. She gave a last check of the burning embers and trudged back to the bed. Her eyes fell closed the moment her body slipped into the soft covers.

The moon's illuminations played little dances across her face; pale as the storm clouds swelled. Adeline was not aware to see the two sharp ivory teeth break through her parting lips.

Remember INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION? ISF was a short lived (two issues) province once published as a companion to L&AF and IF. It was supposed to present the best in translation and new stories of Science Fiction from non-English speaking countries. There were a few exceptions, such as a couple British stories and one of two from Hispanic Journals, but for the most part ISF was a showcase of non-English SF.

It wasn't a very impressive showing. Some of the Russian stories were halfway decent and I remember a fine one about imitation by Walter Brining (Gosman), but the magazine simply could not get stories of sufficient quality to match what readers expected. Consequently the magazine, which never achieved a reader publishing schedule, collapsed. Foreign SF simply couldn't hold a candle to American-British.

The failure of ISF wasn't the only evidence of this, either. For with the exception of Jules Verne there simply hasn't been a widely circulated and influential SF writer from a non-English speaking country. SF has been a solely English language phenomenon, and stories in other languages usually were pale imitations. The few good ones with original ideas and treatments were rare indeed. I remember when ANADIRG claimed to have published the first Russian SF story ever to be translated into English. This wasn't the case, as there had been another in the same magazine years earlier, but the point is obvious.

No SF writer of importance has come from the non-English countries, and no tradition has developed from them. They simply have made no noteworthy contribution to the field.

Until now. One man has changed all that, single-handedly making foreign SF worth watching. He is the pillar of SF in the communist world, and perhaps one of the three or four top SF writers on the entire planet!

His name is Stanislaw Lem.

Lem is a Pole, and has had 18 or more books of SF published in Polish, with reprints in Russian, German, Japanese, French, Italian and other languages. Sales have run into the millions, with 1.7 million in the USSR alone. I don't believe any western SF writer has ever been that successful.

Lem is an immensely educated man and a great scholar, author of many books and articles on literature and science, most notably *Summa Technologiae*. He seems to be just the kind of first-rate mind this and every other field so needs.

Oddly enough, very little of his work has ever appeared in English. Prior to the recent publication of *Solarians* (Walker \$4.95), Lem has only been available to the English reader in a "mangled story in an old anthology," according to LARRY JARVIN, a short story in the first issue of *VISION OF ROMANOV*, and four stories in *Other Worlds Other Sides*, an anthology of SF from socialist countries.

These stories showed Lem to be a competent writer who produced polished but sadly minor stories dealing with interesting ideas in a rather shallow manner. Certainly they did not show the SF subgenre that Lem really is.

He is a novelist, and only with the appearance of *Solarians* has the English reading public been able to see what he can really do. The book has tremendous power, despite being Lem once removed (it is a translation of a French translation of the Polish original). According to a quote provided by his agent, Franz Rothenselner, Lem considers the Polish to French translation to be rather poor, and the French to English quite good.

There is no way to tell what kind of a stylist Lem is. Certain secrets of style do not come out in translation, and this one has probably



lost more than most. Solari is sometimes tough going because of wordiness, clumsiness of language, and the like. But this is to be blamed on the translator. The only writing style Les shows is a tendency to lecture. This is in part unavoidable, because there simply is no other way to convey large amounts of information quickly unless characters ask each other stupid questions like they used to in old-time American SF. Les's protagonist goes to the library and reads a book. The lectures are indeed interesting but while they are going on the story is brought to a complete stop, and sometimes he uses this device simply to fill in background of the history of the exploration of the planet Solari, and seems to convey too much, often things which have little relevance to the novel proper.

Also Les sometimes fails to give a sense of a future setting. For example, his space station (actually a large hovercraft which usually stays in one place) has doors with glass in the windows instead of hatches. Occasionally the 20th century imagery gets a bit annoying.

Grice, myself included, have a tendency to object. With all this packed, we can now get to the heart of the matter: Solari.

Les has a background in western SF; he has read enough so one won't find him duplicating hopelessly worn ideas, but he is not really a part of western tradition and this is one of his strongest virtues. He has not absorbed the standard attitudes and philosophies of western SF. John Campbell, the most important single person in the history of modern science fiction, injected into most of the major writers certain ideas which have become so deeply ingrained in American tradition that they threaten to become dogma. The new were tried to do away with these ideas, but got lost in literary pretentiousness and collapsed thru paucity of imagination and general lack of talent, as they remain. One of the most prevalent of them is the idea that man, thru reason, can master any problem, conquer any obstacle, if he has the proper resources and applies himself in a truly scientific manner.

Les simply doesn't accept this, and in the course of the novel he has clearly defined its major shortcomings.

Man has come out to explore other worlds and other civilizations without having explored his own labyrinth of dark passions and secret chambers, without finding what lies behind doors that he himself has sealed.

(p. 157)

Can man be so presumptuous as to claim he is able to master anything? Does he know himself that well?

The basic phenomenon of Solari is a vast ocean which encompasses an entire planet. It is alive, a vast fluid brain whose thought processes are completely beyond human understanding. The contact striving for by men over the years is impossible. The "living ocean" is simply too alien.

Solari is, in this sense, a shocking novel. It goes against the Campbell tradition by showing something which mankind simply cannot master, because he is human. The ocean of Solari has the ability to read the minds of the scientists stationed there, and from those graduate regions of persons from each man's past. In each case it is someone around which the person's deepest guilt feelings are centered, and it offers them a chance to live again and make right personal relationships which they have botched in the past. The phenomenon also seems to haunt them, as they find themselves confronted with the things hidden behind the "sealed doorway" of the mind that were never understood and simply shut off in hopes that they might go away. One scientist kills himself, and the other three go into isolation from each other, not working together in a rational, scientific manner, but hiding their secrets from each other. Solari, the protagonist, never does see the "openings" of his two comrades, even though these creatures are incapable of remaining away from their sources) and communicating only during very short visits and over the videophones, at which time they keep these creatures hidden. Complications arise as the comparisons other human traits and emotions, and even self-awareness, and become more independent from the ocean, and Kelvin accepts him as a separate person, not his dead wife, and starts becoming emotionally attached to her. Although a scene is eventually found to destroy the creatures (against Kelvin's will), his real understanding of the ocean and its motives is ever achieved, no final solution ever found.

None will be, either, for Les realizes that all science does is open up new mysteries. In the lecture on the history of solaristics (the separate branch of science devoted to trying to understand Solari) Les shows how men in their inability to cope with the ocean have become more and more mystical and religious in their theories and studies. "Only 'contact' becomes a goal fanatically sought, but it is through the short-circuit of human nature, especially those that would invent and apply 'ultra-logic solutions' to things and convert mythology when frustrated, that a real understanding of Solari never may be possible. At the end Kelvin comes up with the idea of the "lucid god" which simply exists and doesn't rule the universe or anything as the gods of old do, but which have the essence of the awareness of the ocean and its incomprehensibility. The impression left to the reader is that this too is but the creation of a human intellect. It may enable Kelvin to live with the fact of the ocean's nature, but it will not help him to understand it. The ocean of Solari becomes a chaotic mirror in which man, self confident in his rush to conquer the universe, sees a reflection of himself and doesn't like what he sees. Humanity has a skeleton in its collective closet, and has made the erroneous tactical blunder of proceeding on to master the universe without mastering its own minds.

Solari is a powerful piece of work, both intellectually and emotionally. It fulfills all the potential that Science Fiction has ever shown. It probes deeply into the human mind, but never fails to maintain an awareness of man's relationship with the oceans around him. Brilliant in an understatement.

Les's position in modern SF is now to be reckoned with. He longer is or a purely western, British-American thing, for Solari has contributed a writer who may turn out to be the new Wells.

I can only suggest that some enterprising publisher (Walker?) bring out more of Les's works. There is a bibliography in the back of Solari of man and his relationship to the universe, and stand all western SF tradition upside down in the course of one 200 page novel, one wonders what he does in the rest of his work.

ROBERT WEINBERG:



searching for the
Fantastic

Sooner or later, if you like fantasy and supernatural fiction, you are going to discover that Ketter, Lomas, and Lin Carter are not enough. Good and security is rarely satisfying after a few books. The ballistics Adult Fantasy Life has grown rather tedious, and many of the books have an unfortunate weakness. Lin Carter is constantly looking for rare novels of fantasy, but his interest in imaginary lands and settings has severely limited the scope of the Fantasy series. Where to find worthwhile fantasy?

The purpose of this column is to point out some fantastic/supernatural stories that are not as well known or as easy to find as the paperback reprints that have flooded the bookstores. I am not going to review stories that are worth reading but impossible to obtain. Instead, I want to point out headlines that might be overlooked by the average fantasy fan.

In the late thirties, Wright and Brown Ltd. of London published a series of eight novels in hardcover by "Jack Mann." The real author of these stories was English author E. Charles Rylan of whose very little is known (except that he has been dead for some time). The eight books are all about a fictional detective, Gregory Jordan Green, nicknamed "Geez." Unfortunately for most fantasy fans, the books were cheaply made and are almost impossible to obtain at any price these days.

A number of the "Geez" stories are supernatural mysteries of the finest type. Rylan was a typical English author and his stories are not fast moving. Instead, his novels are filled with real people and lavish detail. In one of the novels, by the time 100 pages have gone by, both the reader and hero know exactly what the essence is, but it is not till more than 150 pages more that the mysteries are destroyed. Some people will definitely find such stuff too slow paced and the "Geez" novels are not recommended for them. However, if you relish fine writing, good characterization, and a steady smattering of tension and suspense, then the "Jack Mann" novels are for you.

As stated above, the Wright and Brown Ltd. hardcovers are difficult to obtain and as expensive as hell. However, four of the best "Geez" novels are easily available to the ambitious collector:

Just recently, Bookfinger (Box 487, Peter Street Station, N.Y. 10001) a small edition publisher dealing mainly in less known titles, has reprinted one of the best "Geez" novels, *Dark Halls*. The book is an attractive volume and sells for \$1.99. It is nearly 300 pages long. *Dark Halls* concerns the "old dead" and other supernatural beings, even into a satisfying blend of mystery and fantasy. Make this one of the best novels of its type. If the Jack Mann series sounds interesting, this is probably the one to buy to see how you like the series.

Famous Fantastic Mysteries reprinted another "Geez" novel in its June 1979 issue, *Bar-Such-Are-Dead*. This issue can be obtained from one of the Used-Magazine Dealers in the field, costing probably no more than \$1.00.

A. Merritt's Fantasy Magazine reprinted *The Ninth Life* in its April 1979 issue. This magazine also can be obtained from the same sources as above, at probably the approximate same price.

A fourth "Geez" novel might prove to be somewhat more difficult to obtain. In 1976, Argosy published two of the Gess novels. *The Ninth Life* was reprinted in the A. Merritt Magazine, but the other story, *The Shape of Shadow*, has never been reprinted in the United States after this initial appearance.

The Maker of Shadows is probably the best of the Gess stories and is one of the best fantasy novels ever written. It is filled with fantastic lore with a believable and menacing villain. It gets the blurbs for the first part of the serial:

"In a remote corner of Scotland presides a spirit of evil more violent than time, of mysteries more subtle than the secret of life and death. Shadows threat with the whisper of the undead, and the fog calls to an unknown voice. And in their midst is Gess! Mactorn, who spins archaic webs to trap the souls of the living..."

The five part serial also featured interior illustrations by Virgil Finlay (some of his finest work was being done for Argosy at this time). Finlay contributed one of his best covers for the first section.

Contrary to what one might think, getting all five parts of this novel is not that difficult. I started with the first issue and each from a used magazine dealer. Most issues of Argosy are available from this period cost around 30¢ each. The serial appeared in five issues of Argosy from Dec. 6, 1978 to Jan. 6, 1980. An interested collector should not have too hard a time finding these.

Bookfinger promises a hardcover of *Gess' First Case* in the near future. While that volume is not fantasy, it does provide a good introduction to the character and the rest of the series. An edition of *The Ninth Life* is also planned.

WRITE ON!

THE NOVELS IN THE BOX, by Edward Cooper, Putnam, Best Club Edition

In 1966, Edward Cooper wrote a novel entitled "Draconis," in which a group of Terrans were crashed up. "Twilight Zone"-ishness, and depicted in an alien environment as cyborgs live in an experiment conducted by a super-advanced alien race. The group was held together by a somewhat reluctant 35-year-old English failure named Richard Avery, and ultimately won all trials and tribulations. It was a rather good novel, and apparently Cooper thought so, too, because with "The Menace in the Sky" he has depicted many of the same elements again. Avery is a few years older now, and Cooper names his Russell Grahame, but it's probably the same character. The group of Terrans is larger, and there are a number of other complications, but both novels have been written from the same outline.

This is not a complaint, and you, simply an observation. There are enough dissimilar elements to make them two distinctly different stories, yet both novels are handled well and are worth reading. It is, though, a curious thing that, despite some outstanding segments dealing with the contact between the Terrans and two other groups inhabiting the area in which

they are stranded, I would in general rate the earlier novel as the better of the two. One major reason for this is the quality of the characterization. In "Transit," Cooper had only four real characters with whom to work, a quartet of Terrans sailing a Robinson Crusoe-type enterprise on an island beneath a strange sun. "Sea Horse in the Sky" has sixteen Terrans, plus several well-defined individuals from other worlds, especially in a novel that is under 50,000 words. Inevitably, some of these sixteen Terrans are parished out-lets that stand around looking desecrative and are arbitrarily moved from place to place by the author. It is surprising that Cooper achieves as much as he does with characterization; Graham/Amory is a believable individual, as are a couple of the other Terrans, and the three principal alien characters.

Cooper is an excellent writer, and this book is extremely strong in terms of smoothness and pacing through most of its length. It begins to fizzle around the edge toward the end, but never to the extent of seriously demeriting it as a novel. There are a couple of sawn-off points, such as the fact the planet on which the action takes place is supposed to have a gravity three times Earth's, gravity being mentioned once, very early in the story. This fact never has the slightest effect on the physical activity of the characters. Still, while it is not as exceedingly good as "Transit" or as Cooper's major novel to date, "Five to Twelve," "Sea Horse in the Sky" is well worth reading.

--Ted Peala

KLING PRINCES IN ARMED, by Roger Zelazny, Doubleday, 1970, \$4.35, 168 pp.

I once thought that Zelazny was just another fast-talking yamprolifer, because he was easy and very rapid to read. I'm afraid that was more the earmark of my reading immaturity than Zelazny's lack of skills. The very fact that *Kling Princes* goes down like a smooth drink reveals his cornerer's grasp for twirling all the clumsy scaffolds and stageprops of writing with an airy ease of the pen--and keep the finely disguised goldfishes behind. He is that's controversial gift, that ruthless backstage who can pick up a sheaf of storytelling and cut and cut and cut and cut until all that is left is a mountain of shorn language--and a paragraph of poetry. And that's the word I'm groping for--poet, and it seems well on Zelazny. Yeah, I know that we know that anyone who sleep together a few times will have a few objectives without the dignity of punctuation but I tell you that poetry belongs to those birds who strain with sharp, gemlike precision and forest-rain beauty.

Is Zelazny in a dreaming post-germane even a superior one. Aye, there's the rub--far if he is a superior poet then it follows that he is digested by many relatively inferior readers. And if these readers are inferior (like me), then how shall we ever fully appreciate Zelazny? And as long as we don't fully appreciate him, we are underestimating him... we may say and understand him anyway, since if we ever do reach the end of the tushy where we are an excellent reader as Zelazny is a writer, we may be disappointed at his finiteness and raise him to the roots in vengeance. You never know, Roger.

You're safe this time, though. To date I have read 4 Zelazny novels; of that quartet *KLING PRINCES* is by far the worst. It is also an excellent book, and an open eye to read: the hero is lovable and the action breathless because most of us are underestimating him. So, we say and understand him anyway, since if we ever do reach the end of the tushy where we are an excellent reader as Zelazny is a writer, we may be disappointed at his finiteness and raise him to the roots in vengeance. You never know, Roger.

The beginning will drive you up the wall. Hero wakes up in hospital and, surprised of surprise, has amnesia. Ain't that original? Having lost lots of memory and his good leg, he naturally breaks out of sanitation in the time it would take most of us to adjust our asses. And on the hero breaks in the approved San Francisco fashion, friend to no man, seeking he knows not what....

I don't know about you, but after that first baker's dozen of pages I nearly threw up in the dough. "Could it be," I asked myself between spones, "that the Golden Boy has failed?" A relevant question, you'll agree.

Fortunately, the spluttered start turns out to be a scene designed to scare away tentative adrenergic straggledippers of art. After the initial sacrifice (which, as you've probably deduced, isn't writer), in it's usual important style, with a Zelazny switchgear gears smoothly into his rightful groove--the classic myth. I have it on good authority that this time it's centered on the Pacific legends I really don't know, being ignorant in the ways of Polynesian. But should the Good Lord ever decide to redo this planet, I suspect that he took liberating lessons from Zelazny; for *KLING PRINCES* is a creative sort of a second order. Zelazny takes the time of luck and likelihood and rolls them with cool calculation, using whatever comes up as the plot. That may seem to be the heart of accuracy, but it's perfectly crinkled to science fantasy: the natural laws do assist, but they can be turned by the reckless forces of wressem--a situation that, in the fingers of a skillful writer, can greatly heighten the power.

Roger Zelazny is a skillful writer.

Be rather than being a slushdash of polar bears and South Sea Islands, or a tedious equation whose very soul is predictability. *KLING PRINCES* is a reasonable and exciting romp where you're never quite sure of what always we next. And while the basic situation is apocryphal, Zelazny displays his hand rather well in keeping the hero's identity a mystery (rather well, not finally. I think he could have put out about 15 pages of the year-narrative-on-the-tip-of-my-tongue routine without undue suffering); that builds suspense, too. But most important, Zelazny is aware of what he is writing and he accordingly enacts his style to a relaxed gallop.

Zelazny doesn't waste words, and he doesn't waste sentences, either. Mostly he is concerned with how to tell the story in 25 perfect words or less, and usually succeeds. His literary bloops are mostly in poetry; he has a gift for twirling a word to carry a misfire that would tax a lengthy sentence out of a lesser man. But is tempted to shout *Belkain*, but one won't go overboard. Sincerely, says.

--Leon Taylor

Now To Deal With You! fanzine reviews by KEN SCHER

ANSA V.2, #4 1/306, 10/84-85 110cographed
Ansa, Box 403, Philadelphia, Pa. 19121

Oddly enough, as the amount of words and scenery material on the *ANSA* rises up, the amount of good & b fanzine material seems to go down with the reader's discussions of plots, weapons and heroes that stand its case in the past, the current crop of material, is rather disappointing.

That's not to say "ANSA" is a fair parody of all *Star Wars* & b heroes; reviews of lots of paperback & b and the first two volumes of *Star Wars* *Star Wars* letters on various films; lots of excellent artwork and an article on the background of the movie. Much as I hate to say it, despite the fact that this material isn't *ANSA* is still making this

ANSA #8 Free for the usual
Frank Taylor, 1463 1st Ave., 54
Seattle, WA 98101



LETTERS



Open-Order

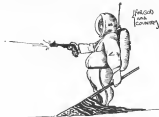
I find this list slightly disappointing, presumably because the fiction is not the type that I really enjoy (with one major exception, and even that isn't as good as usual). The comments start off with the exception: "The Quark Amusement," by Ken St. Andre and Jerry Ballards. This has our air of wild wonderers as in Lemuel, and does not on the start end of the spirit... however, but not up to the level of their previous stories. Next is a long article-style book review of *Parasite in Space* and *Well*. Interesting, but I would probably like it better if I had read the book and could see more specifically what the reviewer was getting at. "Cyber," by Vincent Edwards is a fairly standard robot-revolt story which depends as a climax that almost went past me (why can't someone do a parody of this type that includes the Three Laws? This one loses them). "Why Did 70 Cowards of the Apollo XI Mission Win a JEDOO?" by Doug Hamilton is a standard but very funny satirical review of the spaceship from the standpoint of a movie reviewer. "In This New World" by Gerald Haddock is a pretty standard story of robots destroying everything imperfect... a pretty standard story of robots destroying everything imperfect... including humanity. "Kewell" by Reinhardt, is an interesting science that will be familiar to any fan of the movie *Forbidden Planet*. The rest of the line is taken up with the usual book reviews. Some list reviews by Leon Taylor, and the Lettered.

ALBERT #2 1/16, 1/61.00 litho?
Bill Adams, 809 Lorraine, Springfield, IL, 62704

The first impression that comes to mind is "pretentious." The table of contents not only lists the names of the stories, but also tells how wonderful they are. The stories themselves are sprinkled with prefaces and epilogues, and footnotes explaining the meanings of various names and phrases, and telling just what the story was about. There are some book reviews that are completely unprofessional, and some poetry that is fairly good, and some that varies from surrealistic to reasonable. All in all, this is not too bad a show, but the quality (and layout) footnotes widely. The excellent reply is a step in the right direction, and the stories, for all of their reviews, aren't all that bad. This is not an "offset" of the quality, but it has a long way to go before the quality of the material matches the quality of the reply.

Due to pressing personal commitments, Ken will be unable to continue his fanzine reviews for *Star Route* with issue. Next issue, the column will be written by Charlie F. Smith, editor in his own right of a fine fanzine, *Ironhorse*. Say a copy.

All fanzine for review should be sent to Charlie at the following address: Star Route 2, Payot Lakes, Minnesota 55472.



I always enjoy Janet Fox stories. They have a tendency to have a touch line.

Your own story "You Only Die Twice" is good. I never read anything like it before and will be interested. I would like to read more of them.

The Morgan Smith story is unusually good. It is only the second one I have read. His and yours are good. Where does Mr. Smith get his ideas for such wild structures? [w]

The "How to Deal With You" section is pretty good. Fanzine reviews are fair. If you can use just a brief answer, which would be adequate, you can get 12 to a page instead of 4. [w]

Your list section is good. I like to read other people's public mail. Very nice list.

[[[w]]] The fan's, ultimately? I might suggest that editors send a copy of their fanzine to Leo to help him pass the time in prison. You're surrounded a lot. [w] Ever read "Pickman's Model" by H. P. Lovecraft? [w] I prefer quality to quantity, and I agree that it may cause a synopsis would suffice. However, I'll leave this decision to Charlie F. Smith. [w]

Robert Coulson Just got SPACE & TIME #13, and you know what that cover really needs? A girl in the foreground, running away from the house and looking back over her shoulder. Otherwise it has everything over the lighted window. [Did you know that Gothic romance is what the house on the cover has a light in the window sell better than the ones what aren't? Reconsidering.]

I'm pretty indifferent to these issues, but then I'm pretty indifferent to fan fiction to begin with. [Well, to be honest, I'm not indifferent to the I detect it. But that would be an injustice to say to the editors of a fan-fiction fanzine, so I mention indifference instead.]

And, you don't want to gather everything you need for an editorial ahead of time. Nobody will write in and submit. When you make mistakes your readers can feel nearly superior and write in to correct them and usually as long as they're writing comment on other things as well, and you'll have a superior letter column.

Leinhard must be moving in the Wang circles: most of my readers know who Arthur Machen was. [Among other things, a writer who wrote one work of fiction that was so accurately believable that it was turned into a supernatural "legend" that is still believed in today, by people who will swear up and down that it existed before Machen wrote about it. I refer to "The Hound of Hound," of course. When you can do that, you're a writer.] But I agree fully that "Fanzine is a great thing if you don't take it too seriously."



You're right that writing for fanzines ~~is~~ ^{is} one used to writing - and gives one practice in doing it. But the thing is that writing ~~is~~ ^{is} for fanzines is so more important than writing anything else. If anything, reviewing helped my own professional writing more than anything else. One can't just say that a book is good or bad - or at least in my case it gets dull after a while - one must be prepared to say why, or at least be prepared to back up one's opinion for the inevitable hostile letter-writers. And that leads into learning how to achieve a specific effect, and what mistakes to avoid. But mostly, the advantage of fan-writing is in getting the words on paper. What the words are about is unimportant.

Thing is, if Weinberg wants to write fiction for fanzines: fine. There are lots of fans who want to read fiction in fanzines. (*) I just don't happen to be one of them. (Neither is Tackett, as you may have guessed....)

//////(*) There are? Where?//////

Al Greenleaf
7 Meadow St., Apt. 2
Berrysville, CT. 06766

Space
and Time
13 was a
momentum

of achievement for you and your staff. Definitely your best so far.

Delatte is by far one of the best amateur artists I've seen. His cover captured the mood of the issue perfectly. I would have liked to see his turned leaves on a secretary cover with a malicious vampire lurking behind a curtain. My one complaint is that the house was a bit too dark. It should've stood out a bit more I think. (*)

Only three illos by Osterman this time around. I liked best the illo by Dan on page 2. It looked like it took a bit more time than his usual illos. (**)

The Warren Smith story was the usual fine fare expected from Weinberg. The narrative was a bit stiff. Weinberg's powers of description are as developed as ever.

The Well was fair game. I don't like fan poetry as a rule. Lakin is readable, however. The story told was a bit trite, but nice. (***)

"How to Get to Miami" was charming; original to a degree; with good characterization and a somewhat cliché but still enjoyable ending. My kete off to Mr. Blatz.

The Reconstructed City was boring. Period. The File on Steven Hill was quite good, Jordan. It should've been longer perhaps. To let the air of mystery really get you gasping before the damned answer gets thrust at you. Quite good, nevertheless. Frolch's illos were excellent.

I don't read of that sort, so Low Point I doesn't interest me too much. Same with Write On.

Open Orbit was as interesting as ever. It's one of my favorite parts of the time. Tackett's illo on page 36 was beautiful.

What's said: Oh God, a picture of mine in S&D. Jealous, huh?!! What else is best for full size artwork? [****] I have a cute one-page story in mind.

****%s ds I. But effect isn't 100% perfect. (**) If you're an Osterman fan, you should be pleased with a feature I'm starting next issue—a regular Osterman portfolio, two or three pages an issue, because Dan's so prolific. [***] More about Lakin later. (****) By x 13,!!!!

Del Walker

470 NORTH AVENUE, APOPOIS, AZ 85601
NEW YORK: NEW YORK CITY

DEL'S HOME

A December 1991

1. FANZINE CIRCULARITY
2. FANZINE CIRCULARITY

Dear P. J. [unclear]

I'm a CONY 81 and asking for your assistance in locating writers for my newly-opened literary agency.

I am looking for talented things in manuscripts for offering, being experienced, with people who through one or founder under these covered things. The manuscripts must have dramatic conflict, well plotted and with strong characterizations. Style, writing as clear good writing, occurs hardly in all contexts. My evaluation of a manuscript for submission to an editor is based upon the particular taste and style of the writer, whether the writer has the technique for whatever market he is writing at this particular time.

When a writer sends me a manuscript I would also like to have the following:

- Is the writer published or unpublished?
- How long has he/she been writing?
- What has he/she?
- What reason does the writer have to believe that he/she has now reached professional status?

I believe an agency's role can be stated to a writer: sales are made because the right material is submitted at the right time and this comes through the agent's contacts.

The agent must be honest that "good" agents do not charge a reading fee, no advance. My expenses are charging. To develop one means more profiles clients who are yet to arrive with a first novel. I must charge a reading fee of \$20-\$30 if I feel there is any editing or revision to be done before submitting to an editor. I must be done by the writer. I say this because I am not concerned in making money from the author by getting editing and revision fees. I am more concerned in obtaining a signed contract for the writer who will make a regular or 10% commission.

If you would put this letter in a magazine, post, as writers might see it, I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Del Walker

Del's Home

Larry Weinberger
1035 S. 4th
San Jose, CA 95115

To state that fan fiction isn't helpful is to ignore the fact that a great many of our present professionals started in the fan market. Even if you're just writing for fun, it helps to improve and polish your style. Mail, and realize that words are a visual presentation and as reading markets do it necessarily has to be somewhat impressed by constant appearance.

I intend to sell you something as well as in fact, a great deal of my stories are written solely with that in mind. But I won't send them to fanzines strictly as fast-offers--I'll send them because I think they should reach an appreciative audience that was, where they definitely wouldn't if I let them rather than in my already-stuffed files.

Plus, as Jordan added, the possibility of some useful advice, the certainty of criticism, and the chance of seeing your name in print is a valuable set of lessons for any would-be writer (or artist).

Enough of that. If you don't keep Mark Seligman around, I will beat you severely around the head and shoulders. You've got a real find there, and it would be a shame to lose him. I liked his illustrations better than the Warren Smith story, as a matter of fact--I found the sentence structure too choppy, the narrative in parts too wooden. The character deserves better than that, and it's disappointing to see his presentation in any but the best light.

The Well reminds me of a poem I once wrote about the end of the world. The first verse, as I remember, went

Out of a derelict warper.

Of voices steeped slowly in misery,

My thoughts seem to bid us remember

The first waking seeds of catastrophe.

Basically, there's an similarity between the two pieces, but the mood of "The Well" gives ease of the feeling that I was trying to achieve. Unfortunately, I found it a little weak in rhyme, which is the essential element of a prose poem. Free verse, not being able to depend on rhyme for its structure, must depend on fluidity of action.

If all this sounds like I didn't like it, I'm giving the wrong impression, because I would go to much the other unless I thought it was good to begin with. I hope that makes some sense.

"How to Get to Miami" is possibly the weakest story in the issue, though characterization is fairly good, the writing is smooth, the description is good. But someone, I just didn't like it. (This is going to sound a little bit strange when I say that I thought that technically this story was probably the best in the issue!) It interested me, but I really couldn't see into a story with a fat text as best character.

Stokes's story is an interesting fragment, as loose and disjointed as the dream he describes--which I personally feel, added immensely to the story's "feel." It gave me the impression that this was an early morning cold-morning tale, trying to capture the threat sense before it slipped away with the rest of the night's sleep. More than that, the under-description allowed me to picture for myself what each line might be like, what fine story might gleamed across unremembered stories. A very good little piece.

I found the File on Steven Hill very good as well, with angry, good characterization, illustrations, and plot, this time working together for a tight-knit, readable story. I'm kinda sorry to read it, however, because now it makes a story I was writing on pass, and I'm sure it would sound like I got the idea from you (Gosh, weak and starving, finally head driven into the Florida Everglades, where he's attacked by a cloud of mosquitoes and dies). (A)

But, back to the story. It proceeded very nicely, building up in tone, and the ending was (to me, at least) startling and unexpected--and impressive. I got the idea of some separate, distinct characters from the story (the narrator, the sheriff, and, naturally, the postscript). Also, I thought the last drawing added immensely to the story.

Now, about the art. A horizontal last scene of layout is improved as well, though I wish you'd put the lower left drawing on Dick Spenser's

story diagonal to the one on top, to balance the page a little better. But that's minor quibbling. I still haven't decided whether I like Dan O'Brien as a set, but his style is interesting, and I'm waiting to see what else he can do with it.

Unfortunately, you won't be seeing much of Seligman in these pages anymore. He sent the same poem to Larry Norris, who ran it in Mystique #5. This simultaneous submission was done without my knowledge, and as far as I'm concerned, I would put copyright on my taking, I suppose, but I copyright S&T to protect author's rights, not editor's. (**) No, it doesn't. Finish your story. (**) That page was originally set up for #11--as you say, my sense of layout has improved since.

Don Seligman I needn't tell Bob Weinberger what I think of MORGAN SMITH, since I've said the same things every time I've seen a Smith story. But I've often wondered who in cases like that, the vampire or what or whatever it was that was in the heart doesn't know. After all, the vampire's undead, they're also undead for as long as the stake lasts, and I see no reason for mortal decay not to take place. (X)

I liked "The Well" very much, the layout was kind of annoying since the breaks came in the middle of lines. All the same, this is the sort of thing that Seligman tried to put out in several anthologies of poetry, and never quite carried off.

"How to Get to Miami"--good, but why should the ritual suffice, rather than simply not work? And why wouldn't Larry get someone who knew just how to make the ritual work, rather than a non-believer who was likely to make it up. As in fact he did! (**)

"The Enchanted City"--good far as far as it goes, but the dream ending always a disappointment. (***)

"File on Steven Hill"--well written, but I've seen the ideas used too many times for them to be really effective...if you know the glossary, you can see what's coming.

"How Faint I"--the 1967 Ace edition of the King in Yellow is, so I'm sure, not a new one, and the new 68 edition of the same name is said to have added a few stories that were not included in the Ace edition. I haven't seen the 1968 play, but I can't help wondering if Marion Zimmer Bradley was then affected by or had some effect on it, since the reworking of the story sounds somewhat like her Darkover books (the one she recently wrote as that one, under her name, as a good sign because that's the way that Chambers has his... that that wasn't until after she had started writing the stories that way that she read the Lovecraft version).

I can't agree with Charles Smith about vampires. After all, if you had to sleep on dirt as the vampire were reputed to do, and never take a bath or brushed your teeth, you might smell and have halitosis, too.

The general layout and artwork were excellent. Good luck on #14.

As I understood it, they do sleep, but there's always some sort of bed or a point. Once the stake is removed, the vampire is restored to his former state. (**) Because Larry was a shocker. (**) Now, let's be serious. Right from the beginning, Larry said it was a dream. By the way, the first time he has been forced to drop the vampire revival. (X) He is still one of the few Pantheon Appreciation Society, a group dedicated to looking for contributors to every fanzine they can. So can write to Ken for more information on this. (//)



